

“Dancing King” 2 Samuel 6:12-23

Wednesday 1/22/20 – Jeff Lyle

As David moved forward in leading Israel as their king, he discerned it was time to bring the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem. For decades it had been sitting in places where it was no longer an instrument in the national worship of the God of Israel. After seeking to move the ark without consulting God, disaster struck, and a man named Uzza was killed for putting his hand on the holy ark. David referenced the Law and learned how to properly transport the ark. In this message, we see the unbridled joy of David as he dances in the presence of God. We also see the nasty heart of someone who despised his public displays of worship. This message calls us to unapologetic displays of enthusiastic worship of God, while also warning us about the dangers of judging those who engage their spirit, emotions and bodies as they magnify the God who loves and leads them.

I. It Was David's Grateful Dance (12-13)

A. David had been perplexed (6-9) - “How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?”

When Uzzah died, confusion set in. The bible reveals that David actually became angry with God for killing Uzzah. The previous attempt to transport the ark of God was done according to logic and not revelation. Uzzah irreverently touched the ark when one of the oxen that was transporting stumbled. He was immediately struck by fire and died. All of the initial celebration came to an immediate halt as David wrestled through the humiliation, shock and anger for how God deal decisively with the flippant manner in which Israel was hosting His presence. David found out in one singular scene just how serious God is about our attitudes in hosting His presence. David was left with nothing but questions about what to do next.

B. David had been paused (11) - “And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom...three months.”

Not far from where Uzzah was killed was the house of a man named Obed-edom. Fearing the lord, David commanded the people to carefully park the cart which held the ark at this man’s house. David wisely displayed reverence, knowing that God had been displeased with his previous attempt. David was willing to shut down the whole mission in order to ensure that they did the right thing the right way. Obed-edom was graced to host the ark of the Lord at his home for three solid months.

C. David had been persuaded (12-13) - “So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed- edom to the city of David with rejoicing. 13 And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal.”

Somewhere in those 3 months of seeking the Lord, David got educated on God’s methodology for transporting the ark. He consulted the written Law and learned what they previously had done wrong, and how to ensure that they did not make the same mistakes again.

1. **Numbers 4** gave detailed instructions on how to handle the ark, including not touching it
2. Previously, they had utilized the Philistine method of moving the ark on a cart (**1 Sam. 6:7-8**)
3. David then gave specific instructions to his servants for moving the ark this time (**1 Chronicles 15:12-15**)

II. It Was David's Unrestrained Dance (14-16)

A. David’s actions (14-15) - “And David danced...with all his might...with shouting...with the sound of the horn.”

Why all the celebration? The ark was returning to Jerusalem for the 1st time in 20 years! This was a moment worthy of the most intense celebration that Israel was offered in a very long time. David had stepped into his full destiny from God after a long and painful waiting season. Israel’s enemies were contained, and the people were beginning to prosper. Now, in the midst of cultural blessings, the ark of God’s presence was being brought back to the people in the exact way which God had instructed. Things were being restored, and David would not suppress his displays of joyful enthusiasm at what was being done.

B. David’s audience (14) - “David danced before the Lord...”

David was not putting on a show. The processional with the ark was a national occasion. Scripture says that all of Israel came out to celebrate this moment. David stripped himself of his royal robes and visibly identified himself more of a worshiper under God than a ruler over people. His audience was singular - He danced before the Lord. Perhaps he was thinking of **Exodus 25:22** as he watched the ark moving toward Jerusalem. In that verse, God declares of the ark, “There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony.” David knew that some distinct component of God’s presence was returning to Israel. How could he do anything other than celebrate with all his heart, mind, soul and strength? He did not

suppress his spirit and emotions. He worshipped God in a fully unrestrained manner.

III. It Was David's Generous Dance (17-20a)

A. David sacrificed unto the Lord (17) - “And they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings (wholly burnt, Lordship) and peace offerings (forgiveness & restoration)...”

B. David gave gifts unto man (18-19) - “And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts 19 and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house.”

Not surprisingly, David’s lavish heart toward God was connected to a generous heart toward others. In the kingdom of God, true surrender and worship toward God will result in us living as a generous people. David wanted everyone to celebrate the return of the ark. Everyone needed to get in on the blessing. We have no clue as to what kind of cost and effort would have been expended to ensure that every family was sent home with a feast. Whatever was required, David generously provided it for all. Nobody would ever forget the day the ark came back to the people.

C. David sought to bless his family (20a) - “And David returned to bless his household...”

With all of his leadership tasks completed, once the ark was situated where it belonged, David went home to celebrate with his own family. He wanted all who were in his household to keep the party going with him. Little did he know, one person would bring the holy celebration to a grinding halt.

IV. It Was David's Contested Dance (16, 20b, 23)

A. Some will value dignity over liberty (16a) - “Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord...”

Did you forget about David’s first wife, Michal? When David was made the king of all Israel, he went to reclaim his wife, the daughter of Saul. Michal had been married off to another man by Saul even though she was still David’s legal spouse. Even though years had passed, David immediately retrieved her from her new husband, breaking up the life that she had

been living for quite some time. Perhaps this issue is what caused Michal's heart to become cold and hostile to David. The entire celebration of the returning ark took place without Michal. She refused to celebrate. We are told that she chose to be elevated - looking down on all the celebration from a window within the palace. Dancing, singing and celebrating meant nothing to Michal. Her bitter heart would not allow her to join in. All of Israel was with David (see verse 15), why was Michal not there? She chose isolation over celebration, preferring to judge all of the people in their expressive worship of God. She targeted her husband's worship more than anyone else.

B. Some will choose judgment over joy (16b) - "...she despised him in her heart."

What a terrible thing to be recorded about her in the eternal word of God. Forever her testimony is sealed that she hated her husband with a bitterness as he worshipped and danced before the God of Israel. Never was Michal more like her father than when she hated David for his undignified worship dance. Saul had no holy spiritual appetites. Apparently, neither did his daughter.

C. Some will prioritize appearances over adoration (20) - "But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"

We can only imagine the discouragement that hit David as Michal did not even let him get fully situated in the home before she charged out to meet him so she could verbally degrade him. She arose to rebuke David but not to rejoice in God! Michal's words show that she was completely consumed with the external and not the internal. She criticized David for not acting according to the dignity that she could accompany a king. She preferred outward displays of royalty - reserved, proud and dignified. David, she said, acted like some commoner. Did he not know that he was the king of Israel? Michal was disgusted that he would dance around in such a way that she felt he damaged his own testimony. We will find out a little further down how David responded to her but take note of how God responded to Michal.

D. Some will receive barrenness instead of bounty (23) - "And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death."

We are unsure if God judged Michal with physical barrenness in her womb. The bible leaves plenty of room for that possibility. It might also be that, after she sought to humiliate David, he made the decision to never

have anything to do with her again. She wouldn't have any children if David never touched her again. Regardless of which of these two possibilities was the reality, the bible connects her childlessness to her disrespectful, judgmental attitude towards David's worship.

VI. An Attitude of Prevailing (21-22)

A. David's devotion to the Father (21a) - "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord..."

David was not going to tolerate any nonsense from his bitter wife. He laid it all on the line with her. He pointedly reminded Michal that God removed her daddy from the throne of Israel and put David on it. He explained to her that the source of his joyful dancing was connected to the fact that he had been highly favored of the lord to be chosen above every other man to be the king. She may have wanted David to be more dignified like her daddy, but David strongly corrected her and reminded her that Saul was deemed unfit to rule and consequently removed by God.

B. David's declaration for the future (21b) - "...and I will celebrate before the Lord."

This is beautiful! David was not about to allow some judgmental, bitter critic to ruin his worship. In no uncertain terms, he told Michal that she should expect his worship of God to continue. He did not give place to her critical spirit for even a moment. She rushed out to put David in his place, but David ended up putting Michal in hers. We should never allow those who are empty, bitter critics to speak into our worship. Their motive is always fleshly. We do well to follow the example of King David and make up our minds that God will remain central in how we think, feel and act. We must continue to celebrate before the Lord!

C. David's disinterest in the flesh (22) - "I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes..."

Almost as if David was making it impossible for his wife to misunderstand him, he lets her know that he was just getting started as a worshipping, dancing king. If she was offended with his one afternoon of enthusiastic worship, she would need to prepare herself for the coming reality that David would only seek to grow in his demonstration of joy in the Lord. In essence, the dancing king said to the bitter wife, "You ain't seen nothing yet, sister!"